

CALENDAR FOR PARENTS

URBAN MUNICIPAL

1996 - 1997

OCT 7 1996

What's Ahead for this School Year?

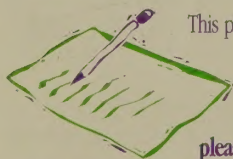
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

A Message from the Chairman and Director

Over the last few years, we've emphasized the theme of parent involvement and the closer linking of home and school to support each child's success. Our belief in the importance of parent support and involvement at every grade level, from primary to secondary school, hasn't changed. In fact, one of our key communication directions this school year will be to increase our efforts to keep parents informed about what's happening in our school system. We feel this is particularly important in a time of changing educational priorities, new school programs and curriculum, downsizing, changes in teacher classroom assignments, twinning of schools and re-organization – to name just a few. It's our responsibility to communicate with you about these changes and to respond to your questions and concerns, both at the school and system level.

A first step in that communication process is to provide you with a brief overview of what's ahead for school year 1996-97:

• Continued focus on measuring student achievement - new system-wide tests



This past June, we reported Grade 3 and Grade 6 student test results on the 1995-96 Canadian Achievement Tests. We are

pleased to report that there was a strong improvement in student performance. In fact, Grade 3 results are above the national norm. The tests, given to student in boards across Canada, measure some aspects of our students' basic academic skills in reading, language and mathematics. Overall results: at the Grade 3 level, an increase from 77% (1994-95) to 86% (1995-96), who scored at or above grade level; at the Grade 6 level, an increase from 68% (1994-95) to 76% (1995-96) who scored at or above grade level.

You should also be aware that results from Ministry of Education and Training Grade 9 Reading and Writing Reviews (1994-95) revealed increased student performance.

In reading, 92% of our students performed at or above the expected range of performance, compared to 83% in the 1993-94 review.

These results are encouraging and exciting. They show that our students and teachers are working hard and that we are making important and beneficial changes in our learning programs.

In the year ahead, accountability to parents and public in the area of student achievement will increase with the introduction of Ministry of Education and Training province-wide assessment of reading, writing and mathematics at the Grade 3 and 6 levels. You will, no doubt, be hearing more about these tests, but we wanted to provide you with some general information.

In April 1997, every Grade 3 student will be assessed in reading, writing and mathematics over ten days of classroom time. Individual results will be returned to the school in June 1997. School, board and provincial results will be released in the fall.

In May 1997, a random sample of Grade 6 Ontario students will be assessed in mathematics. Various activities are involved and they will take approximately eight class periods, each lasting forty minutes. Province-wide results will be released in the fall.

The Ministry will now be implementing student assessment at Grades 3, 6, 9 and 11. As a result, our implementation of Canadian Achievement Tests in reading, writing and math will shift to Grades 5 and 8, beginning this year.

• Changes in School Resources and Organization



As a result of the 1996 Budget process and our response to funding cuts in education, our Board will begin this school year with decreased staff at all levels of the school system. In total, we will have approximately 300 fewer employees this school year than last. First, we want to reassure you that

every effort has been made to offset impact on the classroom. In fact, **over the last two years, we have cut Board administrative staff by 30%. We spend only about 3 to 4% of our budget on central administration** (that is, on administrative, operational and support staff functions that support the classroom, but are outside of teaching staff). **And, we have entered into shared service agreements with local area boards, universities and colleges that will save \$6 million this year.** Even so, the Board made the difficult decision, this past June, to eliminate approximately 140 teaching positions in elementary non-mandated programs, including family studies, teacher-librarians, design and technology and guidance.

The impact of these cuts in the area of non-mandated programs will significantly reduce student access to these non-mandated programs. **These reductions have been equally applied to all schools, however, the impact on each school will be different, according to size and organization of staff.**



THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOR THE CITY OF HAMILTON

LE CONSEIL DE L'ÉDUCATION DE LA VILLE DE HAMILTON

Continued on inside.....

What's Ahead...cont'd from front page

In addition, each school will respond to staff reductions in a manner that will best meet the needs of students in that school. For instance, some schools may be able to deliver a part of a non-mandated program by retaining a staff member with that expertise. Other schools may have to shift staff resources to meet other important student needs. It may be that some schools, for instance, will provide access to the school library throughout the day, while at other schools, students will visit the library with their classroom teacher.

In all cases, we are confident that school leaders will work hard to provide the best possible resources to their students. It is also expected that they will communicate some of these changes to you, throughout the year, so you will know about changes in your child's learning program.

• Accountability for school and staff performance



In addition to our focus on reporting student results on system-wide and provincial tests in core academic areas, such as reading, writing and math, **our schools will continue to focus on School**

Plans, which provide us with a benchmark for performance measurement.

Every school has a School Plan to achieve the goals set out by the Ministry of Education and Training, and the Board.

Each Plan focuses on academic programs; assessment and evaluation; Safe Schools; school facility; staff evaluation; and parent involvement. School success is evaluated with the Superintendent of Schools for your area, and plans are also shared with the school community. Input from parent groups is always encouraged, and with the introduction of School Councils in 1996-97 (see below), there will be increased opportunity for discussing school goals and progress, with parents and community.

School Plans, this year, will also focus on four key priorities, including Common Curriculum implementation (see below), accountability (stated teacher and school objectives for the year and progress in meeting these goals); Safe Schools Program implementation; and parent involvement (including School Council implementation).

In addition, our board-wide Employee Performance Appraisal System, piloted last year, will be implemented this school year. A major accountability tool, the Performance Appraisal System links school system performance with a systematic evaluation of each employee's performance in relation to job performance standards. Our Board will monitor growth and development of all staff through this process.

• Introduction of the Common Curriculum - Grades 1-8



The Common Curriculum sets a new direction for education in Ontario and in our schools. In the Common Curriculum, to be implemented in Language Arts and Mathematics, this September, the Ministry of Education and Training has set out specific learning outcomes for Grades 3, 6 and 9. These outcomes tell us what students should be able to do by the end of each of these grades.

In addition to providing more precise information to parents

about what students are learning and how well they are doing, other aims of the Common Curriculum, include: raising the standard of education for all students; providing students with new skills for a changing world; and strengthening the link between school and the world of work.

Learning outcomes are clearly defined for each of four broad program areas into which all subjects fit. These four broad areas include: Language (English and French); Mathematics, Science and Technology; Personal and Social Studies; and the Arts.

This year, our Board will be implementing Common Curriculum learning outcomes and standards, specifically for Language Arts and Mathematics. Implementation of learning outcomes for the other areas will occur as soon as final standards are released by the Ministry, which is expected in time for school year 1997-98.

You should be aware that over 70 parents participated in the review of the Grades 1 to 8 Language Arts and Math outcomes-based curriculum as part of our Board's preparation, last year, to implement the Common Curriculum in all elementary schools. Over 50 schools have also field tested this curriculum. This input will be used by staff as they prepare materials for schools.

You should also know that while the Ministry produced outcomes and standards for Grades 3, 6 and 9, our Board has, in addition, produced outcomes and standards for each grade level, in between, to enhance continuity and the quality of our learning programs.

Changes in report cards to provide parents with specific information about student progress in meeting these new outcomes and standards, will be phased in over the next two years.



• Start-up of School Councils

This September, School Councils will be operating in all elementary and secondary schools in our system. These Councils were organized last May, in accordance with our Board's policy and Ministry of Education and Training directions. Some schools (about ten) held elections for positions on these Councils, while in the majority of schools candidates were acclaimed. In total, over 640 parents are now serving on School Councils. Also, in some schools, the School Council will operate in tandem with an existing parent group or Home and School Association.

Newly organized School Councils and the continued strength of existing parent groups and Home and School Associations will greatly enhance our current efforts to improve partnerships with parents and community to support student success. As you know, School Councils, as mandated by the Ministry of Education, will also advise and provide input to the principal

and sometimes the Board, on important issues.

Early areas of focus for School Councils will include a familiarization with the school, its operation and current directions (School Plan) as well as the appointment of community members to sit on each of the Councils.

We are looking forward to an increasingly active role for School Councils, in our school system, as they evolve at the school level.

• Learning Centres - Serving exceptional students in their home schools



At the end of last school year, we communicated with parents of exceptional students about a change in direction in serving students with special needs.

While we continue to provide a range of programs and services for exceptional students, our Board's objective is to serve more exceptional students in regular classrooms in their home schools. Of course, this is a process that will be implemented over time and will involve our every effort to provide appropriate support to the classroom teacher, to help meet the special needs of these students.

One of the ways that we will be achieving our objectives in this area is through the implementation of Learning Centres to support the needs of exceptional students. Last year, some of our schools received Ministry of Education awards for their outstanding efforts to provide unique and innovative learning programs for exceptional students, including the implementation of Learning Centres. Principals of these schools have provided in-service sessions for other school staff who are establishing similar centres in their schools, this year. In upcoming parent newsletter updates, we hope to provide you with information on Learning Centres and their effectiveness.

In closing, we hope that you have found this information helpful in understanding our education priorities, directions and challenges for school year 1996-97. As always, you will receive more specific information on some of these initiatives through your school.

We hope that you will find other information in this Calendar useful in helping you to stay in touch with important dates and activities and in supporting your child's success this school year. In addition to useful numbers for assistance and additional information, we have included a special section on **Helping Your Child to be Successful in School.**

As always, you are encouraged to contact your child's teacher, if you have questions, concerns or comments. Our schools welcome your involvement!

Wishing you and your child a successful school year,

Robert Stewart
Chairman of the Board

Donald W. Goodridge
Director of Education

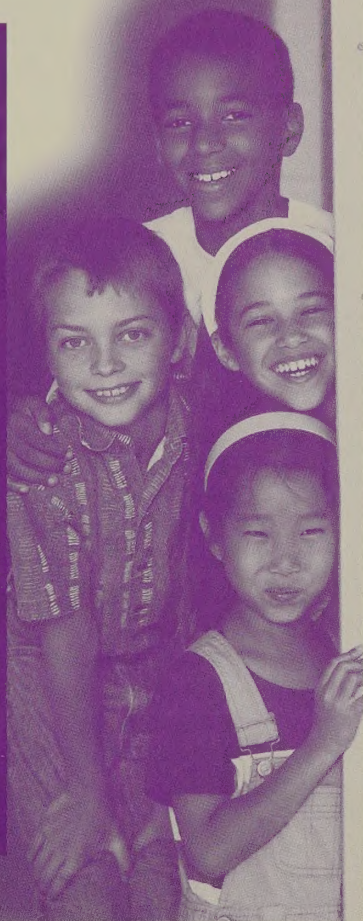
1996-'97 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

PA - Professional Activity Day H-School Holiday

Winter Storm Emergency Closures

During severe winter weather conditions, tune your radio to a Hamilton station, early in the morning. In the case of a full-day school closure, the Board will notify radio stations regarding school closures, beginning at 7:00 a.m.

As always, it is the parent's responsibility to decide if conditions are safe for a child to walk to and from school. In inclement weather, parents may pick up children at the school at any time during the day. Please go to the school office for assistance, or if you have any questions about procedures for full and part-day closures.



SEPTEMBER

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 PA Day	28
29	30					

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27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER

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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 PA Day	30

DECEMBER

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29	30 H	31 H				

JANUARY

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23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH

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16	17 *PA Day	18 *PA Day	19 *PA Day	20 *PA Day	21 *PA Day	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 H	29
30	31 H					

APRIL

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MAY

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18	19 H	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 *PA Day	28
29	30					

Who should I call?

Your school staff want an opportunity to address your questions and concerns. It's usually best to begin with your child's teacher and follow-up with the principal's office, if you need additional input.

Please list school information, here, for easy reference, and ensure that the school has your up-to-date address, phone number and emergency contact:

School phone#: _____

Teacher: _____

Principal: _____

Information Line - call 521-2508

(8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Our Board's Public Relations Department is pleased to provide general information or to direct you to the best individual or department to respond to your need. We can also provide the name of the Superintendent of Schools for your area, or identify staff to address special concerns. Our staff is pleased to provide parent information materials or direct you to Board services and resources.

Superintendents of Schools

Lower City Office.....521-2507
Mountain Office.....574-1668
French-As-A-First-Language.....524-2503

Special Needs Students

Call your school, or Special Education Services, at 521-2526, for more information

Hamilton Council of Home and School Associations

Check with your school for more information, or call the Council president at 525-7682.

Adult and Continuing Education - Take a look!! 549-9722

Adult and Continuing Education has something for you. Consider business, computer, Internet or other General Interest courses as well as Secondary School Credit, GED, and Evening courses.

* Important Note for Parents

All P.A. days after January (including those marked after the March Break) are TENTATIVE only and are subject to change. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Helping Your Child to be Successful in School



We want every student to have a successful school experience. When schools and parents work together, our students are the winners! Here are some ways you can help build your child's confidence.

Be generous with praise

Observe your child carefully and comment on the things that are done well. When you see an area that needs improvement, find a positive way to talk about it with your child.

Encourage "personal best"

Help your child by encouraging him or her to do the best in school and at home. Remember, "personal best" does not mean "perfect", and learning is not the same as high grades. Children, like adults, need the freedom to make mistakes and to learn from them.

Make learning a priority

Your attitude toward school attendance, education and involvement in the school makes a strong and lasting impression on your child. Show your child, by example, that learning is a priority.

Show interest in school work

- Talk about school each day.
- Ask to see classwork.
- Have your child read aloud to you.
- Encourage your child to discuss new ideas and opinions.
- Show appreciation for good efforts.

Schedule study time

Set up an area for homework away from noise and distractions. Post a family calendar that schedules school project deadlines, after-school activities, mid-term dates, exam periods, etc.

Support 100% attendance

Some kinds of absences are unavoidable, but taking students out of school unnecessarily is disruptive for learning.

Help set goals

At the beginning of each term, help your child identify three or four goals. Put the goals where they can be frequently seen. (The refrigerator is always an excellent spot.) Make sure the goals are specific.

Get involved

Attend school activities such as open houses, parent/teacher interviews and parent groups. When your children see you involved, they will also see education as a high priority.

Make direct contact with the school

Try to make early and positive contact with your child's teacher. Visit the school or phone your child's teacher with any questions or concerns.

Source: *Measuring Student Success: What Communities Should Know*, Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 1995

YOUR SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Trustees are the critical link between communities and school boards. They make sure public schools meet the diverse needs of students in their communities. Together, trustees are responsible to the community for the quality of education provided in local public schools. Trustees work together with Board staff to set educational standards, priorities, and goals and monitor how well staff and students meet these expectations. As much as possible, trustees consult with community groups and individuals to make sure Board policies reflect the community's values and standards. Trustees also set the school board's budget. To do this, they respond to community needs, and seek assistance from Board staff in setting budget priorities each year.

Trustees are available to help parents and public school taxpayers to address any issues they may have about schools or the Board. Trustee names and numbers are listed in this publication for your convenience. If you aren't sure of the name of your trustee, please call 521-2508 for assistance.

Public participation in the Board's decision-making process is welcome

Each year, several presentations are made by parents, groups or other individuals. By contacting one of your trustees, or the Secretary of the Board (527-5092, ext. 2201) you can find out how to present your views or how to address concerns. Call 527-5092 ext. 2201 for Board Meeting dates and times.

WARD ONE



Judith Bishop
528-7740



Brian Gage
528-4160

WARD TWO



Dr. John Johnston
528-2730



Joan MacDonald
526-9552

WARD THREE



Eleanor Johnstone
545-9081



Robert Stewart
528-9466

WARD FOUR



Sandy Hill
527-5322



Ray Mulholland
547-2237

WARD FIVE



Margaret Cunningham
561-9471



Canon Joseph Rogers
546-6176

WARD SIX

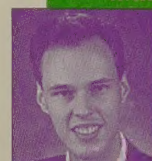


Grant Darby
574-4874



Marion Lowe
389-6094

WARD SEVEN



Geoff Korz
387-6907



Lillian Orban
560-6970

WARD EIGHT

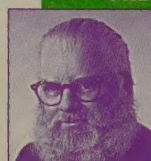


Wesley Hicks
383-2222

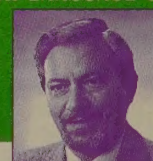


Sue Rodgeron
527-5092 ext. 5117

FRENCH LANGUAGE SECTION



Jean Desmarais
560-3622



Hubert Paquin
522-8542



Marie Patenaude
527-5092 ext. 5116



Produced by the Public Relations Department, (905) 521-2508.
Your feedback is welcome.

